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Are You Prepared?

Like many twelve-year-old boys in a small town, I became a Boy Scout. One of the first requirements was learning the Scout motto: “Be Prepared.” In 1907, Robert Baden-Powell wrote what this means in *Scouting for Boys*: “You are always in a state of readiness in mind and body to do your duty.” Leaders shared wisdom through that simple motto as it taught us that preparation is not optional; it is the foundation for facing any challenge with confidence and competence.

I loved and quickly applied preparation to my fishing trips: deciding where to fish, what bait to use, checking my line’s strength, packing bug spray, and bringing a stringer to ensure that if fish were biting, I’d bring fish home. Those outings showed me the joy of readiness paying off in tangible results.

Consistency proved harder elsewhere. In pharmacy college, I understood calculus principles but lacked algebra preparation, so I took calculus twice. That humbling experience drove home a key truth: partial preparation leads to failure.

Later, as a business professional, I encountered James Baker’s “Five P’s”: “Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance.” After twenty years of uneven application, the wisdom finally stuck. I still remind myself daily to “Be Prepared” for whatever comes—meetings, crises, or opportunities. Life’s unpredictability demands it.

Scripture elevates this principle to eternal stakes, urging God’s people to ready themselves for the Lord’s coming, a theme woven through warnings like “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour” (Matthew 25:13, ESV). In 1 Peter 3:15, believers are specifically urged to be ready to defend their faith amid suffering: “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (ESV). Peter wrote to persecuted Christians, emphasizing that true readiness starts in the heart—honoring Christ inwardly—before flowing into gentle, bold witness outwardly.

Peter himself embodied this after failure. Having denied Jesus three times, Peter was restored. Jesus asked, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” three times (John 21:15-17, ESV). Each affirmation brought a command: “Feed my lambs,” “Tend my sheep,” “Feed my sheep.” True love for Jesus shows in selfless service and spiritual care for His people—from nurturing new believers to guiding the mature. It is not abstract affection, but hands-on ministry mirroring Christ’s own shepherding heart.

Jesus ties this together plainly: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15, ESV). This connects directly to the two greatest: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. . . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39, ESV). Love for Christ means wholehearted devotion to God, expressed in sacrificial love for others—powered by His Spirit, not mere human effort. Obedience is not a burden but the natural outflow of a transformed heart.

These words come alive in His call to be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:13-14, ESV). Salt that loses taste or light hidden under a basket pictures faith that affirms truth but never lives it publicly. Jesus warns against this uselessness, commanding: “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (v.16). Obedience must be visible action: truth believed, embodied, and practiced daily in workplaces, neighborhoods, and public squares.

Charles Spurgeon captured it perfectly: “Not that our salvation should be the effect of our work, but our work should be the evidence of our salvation.” Good deeds do not earn grace; they prove it.

So, if we love Jesus and publicly claim Him as Lord, can we say we daily take His commands to love God and neighbor seriously? Are we prepared to explain why we are called children of God (1 John 3:1)? In a world quick to mock faith, being salt and light demands readiness—not just knowing truth, but living it boldly, graciously, for His glory. The Lord’s return draws near; may we be found faithful.